The A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter contains a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

Entered as second-class matter September 19, [illegible], at the Postoffice at Washington, D. C., under the act of August 24, 1912.

AGITATE!
EDUCATE!
ORGANIZE!

VOL. 6. NO. 52. WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 1917. WHOLE NO. 312.

LABOR INJUNCTION IS CUNNING SCHEME

Springfield, Ill., March 24.—"Why do our enemies contend that injunctions are more effective than laws in the prevention of unlawful threats, intimidation and violence?" asked Secretary Olander of the state federation of labor at a legislative hearing on labor's request for an injunction-limitation bill.

Then the trade unionist answered his question as follows:

"If they (employers) expressed their real opinions they would say frankly that violence can only be dealt with effectively through the law, and that violence is only referred to in labor injunctions for three purposes; first, to ease the conscience of the judge who issues the injunction; second, to prejudice the public mind against the strikers; third—and most sinister—for the purpose of breaking down all legal safeguards against false accusations and thus making it a simple matter to convict the innocent. I say that is the deliberate purpose of our enemies. Avoiding the direct charge of violence, which is a crime under the law, they substitute a charge of contempt of court, and thus they prevent trial by jury, obtain convictions on affidavits made by spies and professional strikebreakers, and deprive the accused striker of the safeguards against false accusation and unfair conviction with which the law surrounds even the meanest criminal. Conviction of the innocent becomes easy —that is why our enemies prefer to use the equity judge and his injunctions rather than to appear in the law court, where the law—not the judge—is supreme, and where a jury may pass on the guilt or innocence of the defendant.

"A person charged with crime in a law court is assumed to be innocent until proven guilty. But the assumption is reversed in the equity court, where he is summoned to show cause why he should not be punished for contempt—in other words, he is assumed to be guilty until he perjures himself by proving innocence.

"We make the same complaint against the injunction judges as the early American patriots made against King George of England:

"'He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and acknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation.'

"And among their indictments against the king we find the following:

"'For depriving us in many cases of the benefits of trial by jury.'"

WORKING BOYS MUST DRILL.

Albany, N. Y., March 24.—Governor Whitman has signed the Slater-Welsh bill which will compel more than 200,000 working boys in this state, between the ages of 16 and 19, to undergo physical and military training three hours a week between June 15 and September 1 each year.

The wording of the law makes it certain that the enforcement of it will be in the hands of strict disciplinarians. Officers and enlisted men of the national guard and naval militia are to be detailed for the instruction of the boys, for which work they shall receive extra pay. One partly exempted class is created. They are boys who, by reason of vocational training or experience, are, in the opinion of the commission, "useful to the state in the maintenance of defense, in the promotion of public safety, in the conservation and development of the state's resources, or in the construction and maintenance of public improvement." The commission created to enforce this law is Major General O'Ryan of the national guard, State Commissioner of Education Finley and Dr. George Fisher of New York city. The commission will have a census taken of working boys upon whom the obligation is imposed.

The law is an amendment to the act which established the military training commission and prescribed physical training for all boys and girls in the schools of the state, over eight years old, and military training for boys between 16 and 19 years, except working boys.

ACTIVE IN SAN FRANCISCO.

San Francisco, March 24.—Journeymen Tailors' union No. 2 has signed agreements with a score of tailoring firms. The sub-contract system is abolished under the new contract. Union No. 80 of the same craft has secured substantial wage increases.

The American Can company has agreed to a minimum wage of $4.50 a day for machinists employed in its four plants in this city. About 250 workers are benefited.

Teamsters' union raised wages 50 cents a day for drivers of ice cream wagons.

United Garment Workers have secured agreements with firms employing 2,000 members. Wages are increased 10 per cent and the minimum weekly wage is raised to $10.50. The union shop and improved working conditions are also provided.

DEFEAT ANTI-"MUGGING."

Sacramento, Cal., March 24.—The state federation of labor lost its fight in the legislature when the senate defeated a bill prohibiting police departments from taking physical records of persons arrested for crime until they had been convicted. The unionists insisted that a person who has been arrested and later acquitted should not be "mugged" and have his photograph placed in the rogues' gallery.

R. R. TELEGRAPHERS GAIN.

Boston, March 24.—A new wage schedule has been granted Boston and Maine railroad telegraphers as a result of conferences with committees representing the Order of Railroad Telegraphers. Wages are increased 30 cents a day and an annual vacation of one week with pay is agreed to. Additional wages are to be paid long-hour men who care for switch lights.

GRANITE CUTTERS ACTIVE.

Cincinnati, March 24.—The Granite Cutters' union has started a campaign to organize small shops in this city. All the large shops maintain contractural relations with the union.

BATHS FOR MOLDERS.

Nashville, Tenn., March 24.—The state legislature has ordered that iron foundries employing more than 12 molders must provide shower baths and other means of sanitation for these employes.

SHIP YARD WORKERS UNITE.

Victoria, British Columbia, March 24.—Ship joiners employed in local ship yards have formed a union and affiliated to the Brotherhood of Carpenters.

GEORGIA WORKERS TO MEET.

Macon, Ga., March 24.—Officers of the Georgia State Federation of Labor have issued a call for the nineteenth annual convention to be held in Fitzgerald, beginning April 18.

U. S. SUPREME COURT USURPED ITS POWER

Cincinnati, March 24.—"The average American is not aware that the power to declare federal legislation unconstitutional was usurped, instead of being granted by the constitution or provided for through an act of congress," writes Editor Frey in the International Molders' Journal.

"From a small beginning, like the entering of the thin edge of a wedge, the power usurped by the United States supreme court developed and grew until it so over-topped the legislative functions of congress that the stage was reached where many of the acts enacted by congress are held to be of little importance until the United States supreme court has passed upon them, and its members have declared themselves as to its constitutionality, a striking illustration of this being the Adamson bill establishing a change in the hours of labor and earnings for railway employes.

"When the delegates who framed the constitution of the United States were in session, three efforts were made to give the supreme court the right to declare acts of congress unconstitutional and each attempt suffered an overwhelming defeat, but a little handful of the delegates favored giving the court such powers. It was not until the time of Chief Justice Marshall that any attempt was made by this court to usurp powers not given to it by the constitution, and Justice Marshall, knowing the temper of the people, inserted a very thin edge of a wedge which, without doubt, he felt confident would have such weight pressed behind it by the supreme court as would in time open wide the thin breach he had started.

"The supreme courts of the several states followed closely upon the heels of the United States supreme court and, through the power which they have usurped, it has been most difficult, if not impossible, to secure legislation which would adequately meet the problems of today.

"The courts of no other civilized land would dare set aside the laws enacted by the national legislative body.

"So long as the question of whether we may enjoy a law enacted by congress is left in the hands of the United States supreme court, we are governed not by congress but by nine men sitting upon the supreme court bench."

OPPOSE APPRENTICE RULES.

Sacramento, Cal., March 24.—Anti-union employers were present in large numbers at a legislative committee hearing on a bill making it unlawful to limit the number of apprentices in any trade. Trade unionists opposed the bill and President McCarthy of the State Building Trades Council made this point against employers who plead "give the American boy a chance:"

"Under persent conditions it would be possible to employ 1,560 apprentice carpenters in San Francisco and vicinity alone. Yet there are but 550. In other words, these employers who charge that we are withholding the opportunity for American boys to obtain employment are in this one trade, in the San Francisco district, neglecting 1,010 opportunities to employ boys."

ASSIST POWDER WORKERS.

Belleville, Ill., March 24.—Ten locals affiliated to the United Mine Workers have protested against the anti-union policy of the Belleville plant of the Atlas Powder company. Powder workers organized and asked for a wage scale to replace the bonus system, and the company discharged three officers of the new union, which it refused to recognize. The men suspended work January 13 last and the company has announced that it will close its mill rather than deal with employes as union men.

At a joint meeting of delegates representing Miners' unions in this vicinity it was voted to ask mine workers throughout the country to take up with the operators the attitude of this company.

ANIMALS TRANSMIT ANTHRAX.

Washington, March 24.—In a bulletin issued by the bureau of labor statistics, federal department of labor, it is stated that anthrax is primarily a disease of animals, such as cattle and sheep, but it is transmitted to man in a number of industrial pursuits, including among its victims hide handlers and other tannery employes, longshoremen, wool sorters, hair workers, brush makers, farmers, ranchmen and veterinarians. The relative importance of this disease is indicated by the fact that for every five deaths from lead poisoning in the United States registration area, there is one death from anthrax.

INSPECTION BILL KILLED.

Hartford, Conn., March 24.—Union plumbers of this state have lost their fight in the legislature for plumbing inspectors in every town of over 10,000 population. The plumbers and many employers urged this legislation in the interest of health, but lawyers representing the Manufacturers' association declared it was an attempt to "unionize the plumbing industry." Under these conditions, of course, the health features were ignored and the bill was killed.

IRON WORKERS RAISE WAGES.

Victoria, British Columbia, March 24.—Machinists and boiler makers employed in three plants raised wages following short strikes. Other gains include the 44-hour week and arbitration provisions. Transportation and board is furnished these workers when employed outside the city.

KILL REST-DAY BILL.

Boston, March 24.—The state senate has killed the bill to provide one day off in seven for hotel and restaurant employes. Trade unionists urge these workers to unite in labor organizations and refuse to work seven days a week instead of pleading with lawmakers to give them something that is within their grasp.

WANT CLEAN STREETS.

Niagara Falls, N. Y., March 24.—The city council has raised wages of municipal laborers from 25 to 30 cents an hour as a result of an agitation for cleaner streets. Municipal officials said it was impossible to get men to do this work for a wage that would not support their families.

STEEL WORKERS STRIKE.

Cleveland, March 24.—Members of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers are on strike at the Otis Steel company to establish the union's wage scale for jobbing mills.

MILK WAGON DRIVERS GAIN.

Toronto, Ontario, March 24.—Milk wagon drivers have raised wages $1 a week and increased commissions on sales.

Patriotic Railroad Managers Concede Eight-Hour Day; 400,000 Determined Workers a Factor In the Decision

New York, March 24.—Fighting to the last ditch against the eight-hour demand of 400,000 united and determined train service employes, supported by the American Federation of Labor, representatives of the rail transportation service of this country became patriotic and announced early last Monday morning that they would yield to the demands of the men, in view of conditions confronting the United States because of the European war.

The so-called "public opinion" manufactured by the managers through the aid of paid advertisements in the public press faded like fog before the solidarity and determination of organized workers.

Newspapers that savagely attacked the workers in their eight-hour efforts are now lauding the managers for their patriotism, but the managers do not intend that present dividends shall be reduced and are preparing to permit the general public to share in their patriotism by paying increased rates.

The four brotherhoods had arranged for strikes to be called in various sections of the country, beginning Saturday, March 17, at 7 p. m. At the solicitation of a committee appointed by President Wilson the order was postponed 48 hours. This committee consisted of Secretary of the Interior Lane, Secretary of Labor Wilson, President Gompers, and President Willard, of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, and represented the council for national defense.

The railroad managers left the president's mediators at 11 o'clock Sunday night without arriving at an adjustment of the question. At 12:45 Monday morning, or less than two hours later, it is stated, they announced that they would grant the men's demands.

The settlement is a complete victory for the employes, who have secured the eight-hour day with 10 hours' pay. Overtime is to be paid pro rata, or not less than one-eighth of the daily rate per hour. The speed basis for freight trains will be 12 1-2 miles an hour instead of 10 miles. This means faster trains and more efficiency, and was urged by the employes in their long campaign for shorter hours.

In yards now working on an eight-hour basis, the daily wage shall be the present 10-hour standard rate with overtime at one-eighth of the present standard daily wage. In yards and round houses working on 10, 11 and 12-hour basis, these are changed to read eight hours at present 10 hours' pay.

In passenger service the present mileage basis will be maintained. On roads having a flat 10-hour day in passenger service the rule will be amended to read "eight within 10 hours."

It was agreed that in the event the Adamson law was held to be constitutional by the United States supreme court and any portion of the settlement is inconsistent with the decision application will be adjusted to the decision. If the law was held unconstitutional the settlement would stand with all the provisions as written.

Early Monday morning, a few hours after this settlement was reached, the United States supreme court made public its decision on the Adamson law, which was upheld by a five to four vote.

The railroad employes will receive back pay from January 1 last on the basis of the settlement. The record of every man's work has been kept since January 1 for use in case the Adamson law was upheld. This was agreed to by the government and the railroad managers when Federal Judge Hook's decision, of November 22 last, invalidating the Adamson law, was rushed to the United States supreme court for final settlement. The brotherhoods took no part in the legal contest, but depended solely on their economic power to enforce their demands.

Negotiations for an eight-hour day reached a crisis when the four railroad brotherhoods, acting jointly for the first time in their history, voted last year to put strike power in the hands of their executives. On a failure to reach a settlement, these officials set Labor day, September 4, as the strike date. President Wilson volunteered as a mediator and recommended that the eight-hour basic day be accepted, pro rata overtime be paid and a commission be appointed to observe the workings of the law to make further recommendations. Over 600 representatives of the men accepted this plan, but it was rejected by the managers.

The men refused to postpone the strike date and then Congressman Adamson, chairman of the house committee on interstate commerce, presented a bill in the house of representatives embodying the president's suggestions, to become effective January 1 of this year. The house passed the bill September 1 and the senate approved it the next day. It was signed by the president Sunday, September 3, and the following Tuesday he signed it again to avoid contention that his Sunday signature was illegal.

Practically every railroad in the country started injunction proceedings against the law. Railroad employes charged that the purpose of this move was to engulf them in costly litigation, but they ignored the suits, claiming that it was up to the government to enforce the law. On November 22 the government asked Judge Hook, of the United States circuit court, at Kansas City, Mo., to dismiss the injunction started by the Missouri, Oklahoma and Gulf railroad. Judge Hook denied the government's plea and held the law was unconstitutional, although the court acknowledged he had not given the case "the care and deliberation essential to a conviction that he would stand to in every circumstance." The government appealed to the United States supreme court, the railroads agreeing that the case should be a test of all the questions involved.

Monday, March 19, the United States supreme court reversed Judge Hook's decision and sustained the law.

SECURE MANY LABOR LAWS.

Columbus, Ohio, March 24.—Ohio trade unionists secured the following social legislation at this session of the state legislature:

Increased workmen's compensation in case of death or total disability to $5,000; liability companies excluded from doing business in this state; commission to study and report on health insurance and old-age pensions; women's 50-hour law; prohibiting job selling by petty bosses, which has reached scandalous proportions; additional medical and hospital services in connection with the workmen's compensation law; seats for motormen and conductors; abolishing running boards on street cars; additional plumbing and steam fitting inspectors; examination of fire bosses at mines; penalizing employers who intimidate workers along political lines; joint resolution calling for a wage advance of 25 per cent for hospital employes; standardizing plastering.

The major demand of the state federation of labor—an anti-injunction bill—was defeated, but the unionists are determined to keep this issue in the foreground.

VAUDEVILLE ACTORS ENJOINED.

Chicago, March 24.—The notorious injunction judge, Jesse Baldwin of the Cook county circuit court has issued an injunction against striking members of the White Rats Actors' union who are enjoined from picketing theaters. The order is of the usual sweeping character issued by this court and not only prohibits picketing but the striking vaudeville actors are ordered to desist from "in any way" interfering with the struck theaters.

These actors are affiliated to the A. F. of L., and are attempting to secure better working conditions and the abolishment of excessive charges by booking agencies.

PAINTERS PROTECT LIFE.

Beaumont, Tex., March 24.—Painters' union suspended work eight days to enfore a new wage scale, which was finally accepted by contractors. Until September 1 the rate will be $4.60 a day; after that date $4.80, until March 1, 1918, when $5.20 will be paid until March 1, 1919. Car fare, lodging and boarding expenses will be paid by the contractors on all out of town work and no employe shall be discharged for refusing to work on a ladder or scaffolding which he considers unsafe and shall be paid for time taken for inspection of same.

R. R. EMPLOYES OVERWORKED.

Rutland, Vt., March 24.—Violation of the hours-of-service act is alleged in a suit filed in the federal court against the Grand Trunk Railway company. There are 58 specific charges that this corporation overworked its employes. United States Attorney Bullard asks for the imposition of $29,000 in fines.

PATTERN MAKERS WANT MORE.

Boston, March 24.—The Pattern Makers' union has adopted a new wage scale of 60 cents an hour and a 44-hour week, to take effect April 1. About 400 pattern makers in this city and vicinity, are interested.

PASS SEMI-MONTHLY PAY LAW.

Nashville, Tenn., March 24.—The state legislature has passed an act providing for a semi-monthly pay day for wage earners.

STREET CAR MEN PROGRESS.

Washington, March 24.—The Capital Traction company has signed a three-year agreement with employes members of Street Car Men's union No. 689. A minimum of 25 cents an hour and a maximum of 30 cents is provided for. The former scale ranged from 23 to 27 cents. The time to reach the maximum is reduced from 10 to six years. Officers of the union will be given leave of absence to attend union duties and shall retain their seniority upon return to work.

In direct opposition to the policy of the Capital Traction company is the anti-union attitude of the Washington Railway and Electric company, which controls a majority of the surface lines in the nation's capital. The latter company has refused to recognize the Street Car Men's union or to even arbitrate the form of a contract that both parties should sign. Every attempt by Secretary of Labor Wilson, District of Columbia commissioners and other influences to mediate differences have been rejected by the company, which insists on employes signing individual contracts. Imported strikebreakers have boasted that the "pickings" are good, and it is reported that in one barn, where the daily average income is $1,200, $6 was turned in by these "free and independents." The police authorities later called the company's attention to an act of congress which prohibits the selling of street car tickets except in strips. The strikebreakers are thus checked in selling tickets, instead of ringing them up, and they are quitting in disgust because of this disregard of a strikebreakers' rights.

PROFIT IN SUGAR; LOW WAGES.

New York, March 24.—The annual report of the American Sugar Refining company shows that profits have increased from $2,991,465 in 1915 to $9,756,379 last year. The total income in 1916 was double that of the previous year. Despite these enormous profits the company has refused to pay living wages to eastern employes who have been on strike in this city and in Philadelphia for several weeks. The strike was used to boost prices while President Babst, in paid advertisments, denounced the strike as an attempt of "agitators to run his business."

KANSAS MINES ARE UNSAFE.

Pittsburg, Kan., March 24.—Organized miners in this state threaten to use their economic power to enforce Kansas mining laws. They have appealed to the governor and their state senators, who are notified that if conditions are not bettered a strike will result.

REJECT BAD LEGISLATION.

Nashville, Tenn., March 24.—The labor committees of both the house and the senate have voted not to recommend the anti-picketing and anti-boycotting bills, pending in the state legislature. The house has also voted to abolish Tennessee's convict lease system.

MACHINISTS WIN TWO STRIKES.

Beaver Falls, Pa., March 24.—The Machinists' union has secured signed agreements with the Standard Gauge Steel company and the Moltrup Steel Products company, as a resulut of strikes which started several weeks ago. About 500 machinists and other employes are benefited.

OPPOSE COMPULSION.

Albany, N. Y., March 24.—Assemblyman Meyer's labor solution requires those employed by any public service corporation to sign an individual contract of employment, and if the employe quits his position without the consent of the corporation he is guilty of a misdemeanor and may be jailed for one year and subject to a fine of $500.

This echo of the last century was opposed at a public legislative hearing by trade unionists and railroad brotherhood representatives. One of the latter declared:

"This bill does not prevent strikes. It makes them illegal and by doing so provides plenty of work for the state police you are about to create. You can start building more jails and penitentiaries now, for American citizens will exercise their rights and liberties guaranteed them under the constitution and will not submit to any such law."

UNIONISM DEFENDED.

Detroit, March 24.—In defending the union shop at a public forum in this city, Judge Jefferies said:

"When last Sunday's speaker announced that we had progressed under the present system; that we had better wages, shorter hours and old age pensions, he was telling the truth, but I would like to ask, who are 'we?'

"I am convinced that all of this legislation has come through the pressure and influence of the working man and without organized labor he could bring no pressure to bear.

"The speaker also declared that labor has a right to organize, but of what use is organization unless it has weapons with which it can sustain itself and do something. Is it merely to organize and look at itself or pass remarks about the weather? It must be equipped with some kind of power if it is to be of any use."

INDORSES WAGE DEMANDS.

Boston, March 24.—The bureau of statistics of the state of Massachusetts, in its thirty-sixth quarterly report, says:

"Notwithstanding the large increases in wages granted in many industries—of which the more notable were those in the textile industry, amounting to approximately 30 per cent during the year (1916) in the leading establishments, and in the metal trades, where bonuses and overtime payments have been exceptionally liberal—workmen are still demanding further advances, claiming that the increases in wages have not kept pace with the inflation of prices.

"This claim is certainly not without foundation."

BUILDING TRADES UNITE.

Columbus, Ohio, March 24.—For the first time in the trade union history of this city the Building Trades Council has a 100 per cent organization, representing 17,000 building craftsmen.

Many contractors have declared against organized labor and, they have been answered by the carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, stone cutters, stone masons, plumbers and steamfitters joining the council to make common cause.

SHOP MEN MAKE GAINS.

Indianapolis, March 24.—Federated shop men have reached an agreement with the Chicago, Indianapolis and Western railroad. Wages of all mechanics are increased 2 1-2 cents an hour and helpers 1 1-2 cents an hour. The company first offered an increase of 1 cent an hour for mechanics, but this was refused.

BONUS SYSTEM WOULD DESTROY WAGE SCALES

Indianapolis, March 24.—The bonus system was started by employers to forestall permanent wage increases, says President White, of the United Mine Workers of America, who makes this interesting statement:

"When the war boom began, more than a year ago, and the demand for men became greater than the supply, every large employer in the country realized that wages would have to be increased. Many employers paid the increase as a matter of course. Others with an eye to the future decided to grant the increases in such a manner as would permit them to be withdrawn as soon as the end of the war or some other development offered an excuse. In spite of the permanent increase in the cost of living, they wished to prevent any permanent increase in the standard of wages. They knew that any flat wage increase would have to stand. The day has long passed when wages, as such, can be reduced. But bonuses are a different matter.

"So a group of men in New York and New England got together and launched a quiet but active and effective movement among employers. They called a conference and marked the invitations 'confidential.' They even gave anonymous interviews to the New York Times and other newspapers in which they pointed out that wages once raised could not be reduced at the will of the employers, and that increases granted at this time must not be given in such a way as to let the men feel that they were to be permanent or that they were given in a form that would make them a legal right.

"Therefore, urged these employers, any increase given to the men should be paid in the form of bonuses, with the understanding that the extra payments represented only the generosity of the employer and his eagerness to share a temporary prosperity. With this made clear to the employe, they explained, it would be easy to reduce or cut off the bonuses at any time, because the employe would be made to look upon the extra money as a free will offering, over and above fair wages.

"It was an excellent scheme for defeating a permanently higher standard of wages and converting the upward movement into a temporary handing out of philanthropy—a philanthropy which could not be claimed as a right and which could be discontinued without provoking protests or strikes. And the scheme has been successfully carried out by many an anti-union employer—employers who dealt with helpless, unorganized men—men who have to take what is given them and let the future take care of itself.

"And today some members of the United Mine Workers are being asked to take part of their wages in the form of bonuses, certain employers hoping thereby to ward off any demand for higher wages. But this demand can neither be warded off nor denied, if the miners exercise their good judgment as intelligent union men and refuse any and all specious substitutes for the permanent, substantial increases to which they are entitled.

"Do the coal miners want increases which are substantial and permanent—increases which they claim as a right and which they can protect by their own organized power? Or will they play into the hands of the relatively small number of employers who are striving to keep the level of wages just above the starvation line, and who, to accomplish their purpose, propose to make any increase given at this time only temporary by attaching a string to it and holding one end of the string?

"Fair wages and the bonus system never did and never will travel together for any distance. Once let our members form the habit of watching the bonus and neglecting the wage scale, and that scale will not only not advance—it will begin to recede. The miner will then find himself dependent on something over which he has no control—the giving or withholding of charity disguised as bonuses."

NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS LOSE, BUT REALLY WIN

Bismarck, N. D., March 24.—The Farmers' Non-Partisan league has lost its first fight in the state legislature, recently adjourned, but the farmers have won a great moral victory, faith in themselves and a determination to wrest the senate—the last stand of privilege in this state—from railroad and milling interests.

The league was formed two years ago, after the legislature refused to built a state terminal elevator, which was indorsed by a vote of the people. It is charged that the big milling interests, especially, blocked the people's mandate. The farmers selected their candidates for the primaries regardless of party. These candidates entered the primaries on their party tickets and members of the league who belonged to parties other than the indorsed candidates, refrained from voting for candidates on their tickets for the same office.

By this method the league swept the primaries. At the general election all members voted for the indorsed candidates, with the result that the league elected 82 members out of 112 in the house of representatives and 18 out of 24 state senators.

With this solid phalanx the farmers entered the state legislature, to be confronted by 25 hold over senators, 22 of whom acted with the six new senators to defeat the league. The strongest fight was waged on a new state constitution, urged by the league. It passed the house but was rejected by the senate by a vote of 22 to 27.

Although defeated in their first legislative contest, members of the league are enthusiastic over their discovery of the power of organization and their success in uniting 40,000 farmers scattered over North Dakota's prairies. Preparations are already under way to capture the state senate at next year's elections.

Plans have also been perfected to extend the league's operations to other states and headquarters have been opened in St. Paul. The farmers quickly realized the necessity for publicity and have established two powerful newspapers.

COAL PRICES MUST BE REDUCED.

Washington, March 24.—The federal trade commission has notified leading anthracite coal producers that any failure to grant the usual spring price reductions cannot be justified by claims of increased cost of production. The commission has heard, the notice says, that producers intend either to withdraw or reduce the regular seasonal discounts on the ground of alleged mining costs.

In its inquiry into the cost of mining anthracite, the report on which will soon be issued, the commission has obtained detailed information on the costs of companies which mined, in 1916, about 75 per cent of the total production of anthracite. "This information," says the commission, "obtained directly from the records of the companies referred to, indicates no increase in average cost in the last four months of 1916, and further indicates an actual decrease of cost in the case of some of the companies whose cost of production is high."

ACTIVE IN SEATTLE.

Seattle, March 24.—Teamsters and Auto Truck Drivers' union has made large increases in membership and raised wages in several instances.

Organized garbage wagon drivers have asked the city council to raise wages.

The Zimmerman-Degan company has signed their first agreement with Boot and Shoe Workers' union No. 437. The union shop is recognized.

Electrical workers are conducting an organizing campaign. The slogan is "half a thousand before May 1."

At a recent meeting of Boiler Makers' union No. 104, 203 new members were initiated.

DETECTIVE AGENCIES GALORE.

Springfield, Ill., March 24.—Secretary Olander, of the state federation of labor, told a legislative committee that in Chicago alone there are more than 50 private detective agencies whose "industrial" departments are maintained for the sole purpose of breaking strikes, spying on trade unions and destroying these organizations.

"It is very natural," said Secretary Olander, "that these 'business' institutions, these private detective agencies which thrive and grow fat on industrial disputes, should seek to make business for themselves."

ABANDONS FORCED INSURANCE.

Albany, N. Y., March 24.—State Senator Mills has abandoned his compulsory state health insurance bill, which was opposed by organized labor, and has introduced another bill, which would create a commission to investigate the question.

The original plan of compulsory insurance for workingmen is supported by the American Society for Labor Legislation, which was recently charged by Frank X. Sullivan, attorney for the state federation of labor, with having secret plutocratic connections.

FURRIERS REJECT AGREEMENT.

New York, March 24.—Several unions of fur workers have rejected an agreement submitted to them by fur manufacturers and union representatives. The objectional sections, the workers claim, give employers the right to discharge, permit discrimination against women workers, and the annual reorganization of the shops.

SHIRT IRONERS RAISE WAGES.

St. Louis, Mo., March 24.—Shirt Ironers' union, affiliated to the United Garment Workers, has raised rates 10 per cent until May 7 and after that date wages will be increased 12 cents a dozen. The union was forced to order strikes that lasted about a week before an agreement was reached.

ARBITRATION IN BUSINESS.

New York, March 24.—The Merchants' Protective association of this city, whose members do a combined annual business of more than $500,000,000, has notified its members of the formation of arbitration committees for the settlement of disputes between them and customers.

BOILER MAKERS RAISE WAGES.

Pueblo, Col., March 24.—Organized boiler makers employed by the Stearns-Rogers Manufacturing company have raised wages from 41 to 45 cents an hour. Helpers' rates are increased from 28 to 30 cents an hour.

FAVOR TWO-PLATOON PLAN.

Boston, March 24.—A legislative committee favors a two-platoon system for municipal firemen. The act is to apply to communities which accept it at elections held on petition of 15 per cent of the voters.

ADAMSON LAW UPHELD BY U. S. HIGH COURT

"Can't-Strike" Advocates Say Decision Legalizes Their Claim.

CONGRESS HELD TO BE SUPREME

Law Makers Have Right, Court Holds, to Set Wages Temporarily to Stop Interference With Interstate Commerce.

Washington, March 24.—Less than 10 hours after the railroad managers conceded the eight-hour demand of the four railroad brotherhoods the United States supreme court announced that it upholds the Adamson eight-hour law, passed by congress last September. The decision reverses a contrary ruling by Federal Judge Hook, at Kansas City, Mo., November 22 last.

The supreme court's decision will have no effect on the recent successful eight-hour movement of the railroad brotherhoods, as these workers secured through their economic power the hours and overtime provisions of the Adamson law, which the court now sustains.

The court was divided on the constitutionality of the Adamson law, four of the nine members holding that the act was not valid.

The much-discussed wage feature of the law is declared by the majority to be a temporary expedient by congress, which has the power to act where interruption of interstate commerce is threatened. Advocates of legislation that would prohibit strikes of interstate commerce employes declare that this portion of the decision supports their claim that a "can't-strike" law will be upheld by the court.

In announcing the opinion of the majority Chief Justice White said that the right of congress to pass an eight-hour law for interstate railroad employes is unquestioned and contrary claims are dismissed from consideration on the ground that "the authority to permanently establish it is so clearly sustained as to render the subject not debatable."

In answer to the claim that the law should not be upheld because congress passed the act hastily and without due consideration, the chief justice said:

"Is it a judicial function to strike down a law because it is said it was not 'considered'? It seems to me that would brush aside every distinction between the legislative and judicial functions upon which the constitution is maintained."

The right of private parties to fix private wages is an inherent right, and to take it away would be unconstitutional, said Chief Justice White. But, he continued, considering what congress intended to do and the failure of the railroads and employes to reach an agreement, to say that the government authority did not have the power "to fill the void would be to declare that the private right had destroyed the public right." This is construed by anti-strike advocates as favorable to their theory and it is declared by these influences that the court's decision will be taken advantage of at the coming session of congress, when "can't-strike" legislation will be urged with greater vigor.

In concurring in the majority opinion Justice McKenna differed in that he believed the law an "hours-of-service" statute and only secondary a wage-fixing law, and thus within the power of congress.

In dissenting from the majority decision, Justice Day held the law deprived the railroads of their property without due process of law; Justices Pitney and Van Devanter dissented because congress was not in possession of all the facts when it passed the law, which would impose upon railroads "the entire and enormous cost of an experimental increase in wages"; Justice McReynolds because congress did not have the power to enact the law and because the majority opinion gives congress the right to fix maximum and minimum wages and to require compulsory arbitration.

OLSON'S WIDOW GETS PENSION.

Olympia, Wash., March 24.—In the closing hours of the state legislature a pension of $4,000 was voted Ella Olson, widow of Edward Olson, state industrial insurance commissioner, who was murdered in his office by a man who was dissatisfied with a compensation award. The senate rejected the pension but the house refused to accept this position on the ground that the state should provide for the widow of an official who was murdered because he refused to pay out money to an unworthy claimant. As the hour for adjournment, provided in the state constitution, had arrived, the senate was forced to recede and the bill was passed.

The deceased official was a member of the Typographical union and was well known throughout the northwest.

HOD CARRIERS WANT MORE.

Hartford, Conn., March 24.—While unorganized workers are struggling along on a low wage rate, union hod carriers in this city are up and doing. They have asked for wage increases of 30 cents a day, effective May 1. Their present rate is $3.20, which was secured last year as the result of a strike that tied up building for two weeks.

PASS COMPENSATION BILL.

Boise, Idaho, March 24.—The state legislature has passed a compensation bill which compels employers to insure employes in the state fund or carry their own risk. Trade unionists believe that if the latter plan is enforced so that the workers' interests are protected the state fund will eventually supercede private companies.

ST. LOUIS MACHINISTS WIN.

St. Louis, Mo., March 24.—Machinists' union has won a six-months' strike against the Diesel Engine company, and all strikers will return to work. The 48-hour week and a minimum wage of 44 cents an hour is agreed to. This shop was the first involved in the present eight-hour movement of local machinists.

GARMENT WORKERS ADVANCE.

Toronto, Ontario, March 24.—The Ladies' Garment Workers' union has swept aside all opposition in this city and practically every manufacturer has conceded wage increases, less hours and improved working conditions.

PAINTERS' WAGES ADVANCED.

El Paso, Tex., March 24.—Painters and Paper Hangers' union No. [illegible] has signed a new wage agreement that raises rates to $5 a day. These workers are 100 per cent organized.

UNION SHOP FOR BOOKBINDERS.

Philadelphia, March 24.—Union shop agreements that provide for better working conditions have been secured by Bookbinders' unions Nos. [illegible], [illegible] and [illegible].